

Throwing Stones

A One-Round D&D 3rd Edition Living Greyhawk
Adventure

by August Hahn

Politics heats up in the town of Nighford. Two candidates for the office of Grossspokesman are engaged in a bridge building contest to win that position and they both want your help! Who will you support? How far will you go to aid your employer? And what will you do when the race takes an inevitable turn for the worst? An adventure for characters levels 1-6.

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This is a RPGA Network adventure game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing the game (or this round of the game), but the actual playing time will be about three hours.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

Scoring the game for RPGA points: The RPGA has three ways to score this game. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use:

1. **No-vote scoring:** The players write their names and numbers on the scoring packet grid, you fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. **Partial scoring:** The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the convention coordinator wants information as to how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. **Voting:** Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the best amongst them, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes. Multi-round adventures usually required advancing a smaller number of players than played the first round, so voting is required for multi-round adventures.

When using Voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in **bold italics**. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

LIVING GREYHAWK Tier Structure

To determine the tier, add the character levels of all the characters. In addition, add the levels of any henchmen or animals according to the values on their certificates. Compare the total to the chart below to find the tier.

	<u>4 players</u>	<u>5 players</u>	<u>6 players</u>	<u>7 players</u>	<u>Lvl Cap</u>
T1:	4-12	5-13	6-14	7-15	4 nd
T2:	13-22	14-24	15-26	16-28	6 th
T3:	23-32	25-35	27-38	29-41	8 th

The level cap indicated the highest level of character allowed to play this adventure. Characters of levels higher than the highest level shown for the highest tier cannot be played.

Lifestyle

At the beginning of every scenario, each PC is required to pay upkeep costs matching the level of lifestyle they wish to maintain. The cost of each lifestyle will be indicated at the beginning of the **scenario**. The lifestyles, and the effects that each has on play, are:

Destitute	You have no living space, and must carry all your gear everywhere. You eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, your only change of clothes.
Poor	You sleep in poor accommodations, and eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, and have two sets of clothing.
Common	You have common lodgings, and eat common quality food. You have normal clothing for your profession (adventuring); nothing fancy. You probably have two or three sets of clothing.
High	You stay in good quality lodgings, and eat good quality food. You wear anything in value up to courtier's outfits, and generally buy a new set of clothing every two weeks.
Luxury	You have luxurious accommodations (twice the cost of good accommodations), and you eat excellent foods. You can throw a banquet for your friends every day, and frequently do. You wear clothing up to the value of noble's outfit, and buy a new set of clothes every week.

Lifestyles come with bonuses or penalties to Diplomacy, Intimidate, Disguise, and Bluff skill checks. These penalties, shown below, should be applied at the DM's discretion, and can sometimes backfire—for example, a PC with a poor lifestyle would not have a penalty when talking to a beggar, but would when talking to a city official. A PC with a high lifestyle should have a penalty when dealing with a group of street thugs, where a PC with a destitute lifestyle might not.

DMs are encouraged to role-play these reactions whenever possible.

Lifestyle	Cost	Skill Modifier
Destitute	14 sp	-2
Poor	43 sp	-1
Common	12 gp	0
High	250 gp	+1
Luxury	500 gp	+2

Adventure Summary and Background

In the Yeoman town of Nighford, a community on the south end of the Little Hills, the local politics is becoming intense. The two frontrunners for the post of Grosspokeman, rival landowners Jalab Kreshin and Olmek Garshweth, have had the town in a stir as they try to win their support. The election close at hand and both are determined to win.

An agreement between the two candidates and the townsfolk of Nighford has determined an interesting way to choose the winning candidate. The town is split in half by a stream, and travel across it is troublesome. Both Jalab and Olmek have agreed to build a bridge over the bothersome brook. The town will then vote on which bridge they think is best, and the winning builder receives the entire population's vote for office.

Both men have different ideas about how to win the contest. Jalab, the richer of the candidates, has paid a sizable sum and hired a well-respected dwarven engineer from Longspear. With that kind of expertise, he feels confident that the battle is already won. Jalab wants to show the Nightfordians that he can solve major problems without tapping the communities resources (local labor-wise, at least), but he still needs someone to build what his dwarf engineer designs. He offers the PCs employment—he wants them to help build his bridge. Jalab believes that by hiring outsiders it will make him look like a problem solver with fresh ideas.

Conversely, Olmek Garshweth has taken the problem of the bridge as a serious personal (and Nightfordian) challenge. He's intimately involved with every stage of the design and construction. He does not wish to place the entire burden on outsiders ("It's our bridge after all") when he and his kin can share the work. Still, extra hand are always helpful, so he offers the PCs a job helping him build his bridge.

This adventure begins with the players arriving in the town of Nighford while on the road to another destination. News of their arrival spreads quickly and both Jalab Kreshin and Olmek Garshweth soon ask the PCs for assistance in their bridge building.

The PCs are allowed to work with either party, but Olmek will not hire any of the PCs if other members of their party are working for Jalab. The open-ended nature of this adventure allows the PCs to determine their own role in the unfolding action.

Jalab will prove to be a snobbish taskmaster, apt to do anything it takes (short of murder) to win this contest. PCs of a less than heroic bent may shine in his service as thugs, saboteurs, and spies. It is unlikely that PCs will choose to support Jalab, but the adventure allows for it if they so chose.

Olmek is a strict, but compassionate, man, and is not afraid of hard work. He rewards those who work with him. He will offer PCs who want good and honest work the chance to do so and profit by it.

After the PCs negotiate with either Jalab or Olmek, and accept whichever offer appeals to them, they can begin to work on their bridge of their choice. Work continues until tragedy strikes. Both builders are getting their supply of stones from a local quarry. When gnolls overrun the place, they are not able to get the stones needed to finish their bridges.

After either battling or bargaining with the gnolls, the PCs can help bring the flow of stones back to the work site, and bridge building continues.

What follows is a running game of sabotage, negotiation, and espionage as Jalab does everything he can think of to delay or destroy Olmek's bridge.

First, Jalab dunks a small gray ooze into the waters upstream of Olmek's bridge. Because it stops long enough to surround and eat an exposed tree root the PCs have a chance to stop it before it destroys the bridge supports.

Then, Jalab sends a spy into Olmek's work site. The spy attempts to disrupt Olmek's progress. The spy has instructions to sprinkle a powder that rust metals on Olmek's tools. If the PCs uncover the spy quickly, the attempt fails.

As a final desperate attempt, Jalab tries to bribe the voting committee to side with his bridge. This attempt can be foiled if the PCs have been both polite and diplomatic to the committee during their numerous unscheduled visits to the work site. If they have alienated or have been rude to the voting council, enough of them take bribes to swing the vote in Jalab's favor.

The PCs will have their hands full whether they try to finish their jobs, stay neutral, join in the backbiting, or stop a feud.

Player's Introduction

Travelling by road from Daywine, you pass a number of small farms. The local folk are in the fields and hard at work bringing in harvests, but take time to greet you as you pass. You feel welcomed, but watched, as you enter the town of Nighford. The largest hamlet along the Javan, Nighford boasts a fine array of goods, decent prices, and the amenities of comfort missing from long days on the trail.

One thing strikes you as odd in this fine village; a running stream too wide to cross comfortably divides the settlement. Standing in the middle of Nighford is an old wooden bridge that allows travel between the halves, but it has certainly seen better days.

Guarded Yeoman hospitality abounds here, from the waves and nods of the merchants on Market Row to the inviting smell of home cooking from the open door of Millicent's Inn.

Give the PCs some time, no more than about fifteen minutes or so, to describe their characters and what they plan to do in the small town. More than likely they have been traveling together on the road, so they have had some time to get to know each other. Some PCs may wish to arrive at town separately from the rest of the group, but they should figure out how they meet the rest of the PCs while in town.

Those who wish to shop may certainly do so. Nighford boasts all the benefits of being on the major trading lane of the Javan river. As such, it has an excellent selection of goods and services at reasonable prices (i.e., the prices from the *Player's Handbook*).

Though Nighford sees its share of travelers visiting the lush banks of the Javan, it has always made due with its single inn—Millicent's. Unless characters insist on camping outside town (an act discouraged on financial and practical grounds by the Mayor of Nighford), they will be staying at Millicent's.

After the players are comfortable with Nighford and each other, proceed to Encounter 1.

Encounter 1: Is This A Proposal?

This encounter begins when the PCs decide to take their night's rest. It assumes the party is staying at Millicent's, if this is not so paraphrase the text in this scene to match the circumstances. Jalab and Olmek will send their representatives to the PCs even if they are camping outside town.

At Millicent's, the rooms are not ready until after supper and 'smoke', an hour dedicated to sipping drinks and enjoying a good pipe. It is during 'smoke' that the text below is read.

Sweet pipeweed smoke whiffs up to the eaves and rafters of this spacious country inn. Dinner was wonderful, with enough steamed fish, braised vegetables, and butter-baked bread to satiate your road-weary appetite. Your mugs never went dry, and your plates stayed full throughout the evening.

Now, as the help tidies the rooms upstairs, bloated relaxation seems the fashion of the evening time in Nighford. Weary from the road, it is easy to appreciate the simple comforts of a soft chair, a warm mug, and the company of those whose only aim is to enjoy the same.

Give the PCs a minute or two to roleplay relaxing and and conversing with each other, or folks in the Inn. Then, introduce Alik "Weasel" Kreshin.

One of the patrons, a man who arrived later in the evening and took up residence at a table near yours, stands and approaches.

"Pardon me, but could I have a word with you." He's well dressed compared to the other farmer folk in the common room, and is finely groomed. His black hair glistens with a faint sheen of oil.

Unless the party cuts him off or utterly rebukes him for bothering them, he continues.

"You look like a capable bunch, just the sort father needs. Oh, how rude of me." The man extends one hand and smiles. "I am Alik Kreshin, of the Nighford Kreshins."

"Now, to business. That is what makes the sun go 'round, yes? Business? Well, you folk surely do a tidy bit of that as

adventurers, no? Otherwise, how would you have escaped life as a farmer?" With that, he laughs derisively. "Farmers..." he says again, as if he had made a joke.

At other tables, people glance up, see Alik, and shake their heads. Some of the folk in the tavern seem offended, at least one of them mutters "Weasel" under his breath. They seem more disgusted with the person than the conversation. Many folk shuffle out of the inn.

By the time Alik speaks again, half the patrons are gone and more are following. "So, would good businessmen like yourselves be interested in some well paying work? My father could use strong backs and keen wits."

From the look of this Alik, his father is in desperate need indeed...

A Sense Motive check (DC 10) will reveal Alik is a tad shifty, but that his offer is genuine. If a PC makes his or her Sense Motive check by 15, they will also get the feeling that the work involved may not be as quite on the up-and-up as he suggests.

Alik does not wait long for an answer. He is not interested in chatting, feeling that he is too high born to talk with the likes of common adventuring folk. He is here against his will, Jalab sent him to hire the PCs, but he doesn't have to like it.

If the PCs refuse his offer, he shakes his head, murmurs something about "road-addled half wits," and attempt to leave. If prevented from doing so, he threatens to call for aid. Though no one in town likes "Weasel," they like the idea of his father's financial wrath coming down on them even less. If Alik calls for help, several townsfolk come within two rounds to aid him. This intervention will result in the PCs being thrown out of town, though the villager loath to go this far.

If the PCs are thrown out of town, the adventure is not over. Instead, have Ulme's offer (below) occur outside Nighford after the PCs have been "ejected."

Instead, if the PCs accept, Alik is but not surprised. He tells the PCs to come to the Kreshin Estate in the morning after breakfast. There, he assures them, they will get all the details.

Once Alik leaves, regardless of whether he has secured the party's help or not, the sole remaining patron in Millicent's approaches cautiously.

"Hail strangers. Please don't judge all of Nighford by the measure of that one's tongue," he says as Alik strides out into the night air. "Weasel Kreshin is not our finest citizen."

He extends his hand. "Ulme. Ulme Garshweth. I'm glad to meet you."

Ulme will pause and let the PCs talk with him if they like. He is up on most of the town news and will gladly share it. He is unpretentious and honest to a fault. Sense Motive (DC 10) will reaffirm this.

When it seems appropriate in conversation, possibly after being asked what Alik wanted them to do, Ulme will explain the contest between Weasel's father and his. Then:

“So, you can see what’s at stake. There’s no denying Jalab is a good businessman. He’s qualified for the role, no doubt. But there’s more to a town than its market, and Old Kreshin doesn’t see that.”

He pauses to sip at his ale, “My father isn’t as sharp with numbers, but he knows work—good honest work—the ethics that Nighford was built upon. Which brings me to my offer...”

He suddenly looks a bit sheepish. “I know you’ve already been asked, and I’ll understand if you say no, but we could use help too. I doubt my father can pay you what Old Kreshin can, but if you’re so inclined, you’d be welcome to work for us.”

Ulme will not press them for an immediate answer. He’ll happily talk with them for a while longer, but he does have to get home soon. If the PCs show any interest at all, he’ll invite them to come by the Garshweth bridge site (which he provides directions to) in the morning. Then, he bids them a good night. Even if completely refused, he stays pleasant.

What happens next is completely up to the PCs. They have the offers in front of them. A section in brackets at the start of each scene after this one will give you what you need to run this adventure if the PCs opt to work for Jalab. The main text assumes that the party chooses to work for Olmek.

Of course they may choose not to get involved. In that case, let them stay in town as long as they like. Both parties will approach them once more. If they still refuse to help either side, the PCs are on their own in Nighford. When they tire of shopping and resting, the adventure ends. Collect voting sheets and thanks the players for participating in a Living Greyhawk adventure.

Encounter 2: Offered and Accepted

If the PCs are now working for Jalab, run this scene using the Kreshin estate described in the Appendix. Jalab will deign to meet with the PCs personally, explaining their duties and negotiating their pay. They will also get a chance to meet Kulgar Deepdelve, Jalab’s hired dwarven engineer before Chapter Three.

Jalab offers the PCs 200 gp each for their work, as well he will offer “bonuses as he sees fit.” He will go as high as 300 gp each, if the PCs spend time bargaining. He is building his bridge in the center of town, so the PCs will be close to the inn.

Although Ulme did not mention it, the party is welcome to join his family for breakfast when they make it to the Garshweth camp. Unlike Jalab, who directs his bridge project through Kulgar and Alik, Olmek is present on site and remains there practically through the entire project.

When the party arrives, read or paraphrase the following:

The early morning sun shines over the campsite before you. Several men sit around a well-tended fire while another man,

Ulme, cooks what you suppose is a large breakfast in a blackened iron skillet. He sees you as you approach and waves for you to join them.

As they near you see an older man, who resembles Ulme—or rather Ulme resembles him—his shoulders are broader, and he stands a tad taller than his son. He rises and faces you, studying you carefully. He then nods with satisfaction.

“My son told me he’d come to you for aid. You’ve my thanks if you’re here to help. If you can not, you’re still welcome to join us for breakfast. Either way, we don’t talk until breakfast is done stewing.”

He smiles warmly and gestures to several flat stones in a ring around the fire. Returning to his place on one of them, he awaits your response.

Olmek is sitting with his four sons, Ulme, Ithal, Pryam, and Olamn. Each of the boys is much like his father—kind, honest, and extremely hard working. They will be quite, but friendly. This should give PCs some idea of the kind of folk they are working with. Even if they have come to refuse the job, Olmek will thank them for their time and warn them not to trust Jalab. He has seen too much of “Old Jalab’s” handiwork to ever trust the man.

If the party is here to join the project, he will welcome them in. This is what he will say:

“I don’t have a lot a money. Most of what I make goes right back into my family and my town. Six kids are expensive at times.” He gives a soft smile to his boys, who laugh at the comment.

“What I do have, I’ll gladly offer you. I have 200 gold set aside for you. You work with me for the rest of the week and it’s yours. If we win this contest, I’ll scrape together something to give you as a bonus, but the pay’s yours even if we don’t finish.”

He looks levelly at you, as if trying to gauge your reactions. “Is that fair enough?”

The 200 gp is the best that he can do. Olmek prefers people to money, and he doesn’t have as much money hoarded as his opponent does. The legacy of his wealth can be seen in his children and in the way he cares for the people of Nighford. His offer is also for the whole group, so the party will have to divide 200 gold among them. He will make this clear to them. He does not want to deceive anyone.

Assuming the PCs agree to the terms, he warms up even further. He will practically take the PCs in like members of his family. The party may only earn 200 gp in his service, but they will not have a material need he won’t try to fulfill. Provided they are not outright rude or tell him to mind his own business, he will try to find out what each PC needs and try his best to get it for them. (See Olmek in the Appendix to determine what he can or can not get for the PCs.)

Run this encounter for as long as you think the PCs need. This is their time to get to know the Garshweths and decide their place in this contest. If you think it might fit better for some players, have one of Olmek’s two daughters (Ivea and Kelori) arrive at the camp with fresh

linens. Some PCs might be the chivalrous sort who responds better to a woman in need...

When you think breakfast and Olmek's offer has played out, continue to Encounter 3.

Encounter 3: The Assignment of Tasks

This encounter is essentially the same no matter who the PCs are working for. The main difference is that for those working with Jalab is, Kulgar hands out work roles and sets obvious rogue-types aside to speak with Jalab personally. When this iron-fisted dwarven taskmaster is finished deciding what the PCs will do, the scene ends and Chapter Two begins.

Olmek will take the PCs aside after breakfast and talk with them for a bit. His aim is to decide what job each PCs would do the best. He was a Yeoman's healthy respect and fear of magic, but he recognizes its place in the world.

After determining where each PC can best serve the bridge project, he asks them if his suggestions are suitable. Once assigned, he will not want to change their roles. There won't be much time later to change where he has assigned them, so they need to be comfortable with his decisions now.

His initial decisions are logical ones based on perceived class and ability scores.

Class or Highest Statistic:	Best Role:
Fighter / Strength	Heavy Lifting, Basic Labor
Rogue / Dexterity	Stone Placement, Woodwork
Cleric / Wisdom	Magical Assistance, Healing
Wizard / Intelligence	Magic Assistance, Oversight

Heavy lifting will involve just that. This bridge will take a lot of wood and stone. Olmek's sons are all quite strong, but they can use the help. Basic labor involves holding things in place as they are fitted, hauling building materials, and basic step and fetch.

Stone Placement and Woodwork are both activities that require a keen eye and a steady hand. Those with obvious coordination skills will be assigned to these tasks, as none of Olmek's sons are especially dexterous.

Magical Assistance will be a great help, though Olmek will not want to ask for any. PCs will have to suggest ideas for their spells, but Olmek will be receptive to these ideas if they seem will speed up the project. One thing he will never have a problem with is magical healing, provided it comes from a good or neutral god.

Oversight is a category that allows for those who are better suited for watching rather than doing to still participate. A lot of mistakes can be prevented or caught early if someone watches the work carefully.

Once the work roles are handed out, Olmek will set the PCs to work, joining them in the growing heat of the day. He seems to take great pleasure in honest work, and

remains pleasant and friendly even during the hardest of the toil. This is another trait his sons share (though Pryam grumbles sometimes about wishing he was able to just 'wave his hands' and have the work all done).

Encounter 4: Toil and Trouble

This section of the adventure is where most of the actual work gets done on the bridges. The PCs should be settled into their work roles and ready to begin.

Presented below is a system for tracking PC work on bridge for constructing. The system takes into account contribution by a number of (likely) unskilled laborers: the PCs. Enthusiasm and good supervision counts for a great deal, though, and the PCs may indeed contribute greatly to the project.

To simulate this contribution, as well as the actual contest between Olmek and Jalab, use the following system for bridge building:

The projects are divided into four main phases: foundation, support, walkway, and finishing. These phases will each require the accumulation of Completion Points. Completion Points are generated by checks against a variable DC, with success granting 1 CP plus the ability or skill modifier (including rank, ability modifier and cooperation bonus) of the PC making the roll.

One PC makes the roll. The PCs can choose which PC will make the roll (usually choosing the PC with the highest rank or Ability adjustment). Other PCs can attempt to cooperate (as per the rules in the *Player's Handbook* p. 62)

The DM can use his or her common sense while dealing with the rolls and the outcome. Basically if the PCs can devise a reasonable method for their work on each section of the bridge construction, give them the benefit of the doubt. As a rule of thumb allow spell casting characters who can use spells to aid in a particular construction phase to automatically grant a +2 cooperation bonus if those spells are cast. They do not get this bonus per spell, but rather per section. Quality of the casting is better than quantity. The following is an example of how to deal with a sample construction segments:

For the sake of example, let's say that among the PCs there are two fighters, one of whom is a dwarf. This group also sports a rogue, a cleric, and a wizard. The dwarf has the Craft (stonework) Skill with 2 ranks, an Intelligence of 12 (+1), and his racial bonus for such skills (+2). The rest of the adventurers have no building skills; thus the PCs nominate the Dwarf to make the roll. The fighter assists with his sturdy back (Strength 18/+4) the Rogue assists in placing the stones (Dex 17/+3) while the wizard lends a *grease* spell to help move some of the particularly heavy support blocks and the cleric uses his *mending* to fix chips or breaks in the support (each of the spells gives the dwarf an automatic +2 cooperation bonus to his roll, increasing his bonus to +9). The DC for the foundation work is 15. The fighter makes his Strength check and gets

a score of 9 (5+4) while the rogue gets a 17 (14+3). The rogue also contributes a +2 cooperation bonus to the dwarf's roll, increasing the bonus to +11. The dwarf PC rolls a 7 (making his total score 16), and just makes the DC. The PCs get 12 completion points for their effort.

PCs can make up to two completion attempts per construction segment. Keep track of the total completion points the PCs gain (even if it is 0), it will be important for the vote at the adventure's conclusion.

The DC for each section of the construction are as follows:

Construction Section	DC
Foundation	15
Support	15
Walkway	15
Finishing	10

There are encounters that take place during each construction section. They are listed below:

Construction Section	Encounter
Foundation	Encounter 5
Support	Encounter 6
Walkway	Encounter 7
Finishing	Encounter 8

These encounters must occur and must be completed before the rolls for that construction section are made. Thus, the Encounter 7 must be completed before the walkway can be built.

If players are working for Jalab, this system does not change. All noted scenes still play out, although Encounter 7: The Quarry changes dramatically.

Note that Encounter 8-9 must be completed before the final phase of the bridge can be finished. When you are ready, begin the contest. Take the opportunity to read the following text as a way of starting the project:

Work begins. Hours creep by as the enormity of the task becomes more apparent. You knew what you were getting yourselves in to, but the scale of the operation was somehow less visible before you started. Building a bridge is a great deal more complicated than you imagined it would be.

Your project begins as a huge pile of stones and several rough beams of wood are hauled to the site. All the tools are arrayed for use, their functions explained to you through the most effective form of learning, experience.

From wax-treating the lumber to rough hewing corners on the rocks, you engage in what seems like an aeon of backbreaking toil. Work begins, but will it ever end?

From there you can bridge into simple dice rolling if you prefer. Feel free to describe and role play through each phase as much as you like and as much as time allows. Olmek stays supportive and gladly offers breaks to those who need them. He is a tireless man who drives his own sons mercilessly, but he is more forgiving of the PCs.

Kulgar is worse. He does not give breaks except on a rigid schedule, and he does not brook misbehavior on the work site. Completion Point rolls made while working for

Kulgar do receive a +1 bonus though, for while he is a harsh taskmaster, he is also a skilled engineer

Olmek returns to his daughters and household each night, but he encourages the PCs to camp with his sons on site. His sons have set up an adequate camp, but Olmek will not begrudge the PCs if they choose to stay at an inn.

Encounter 5: First Visit

In this scene, the PCs meet the Voting Committee. Valon and Maratha Kesk are respected elder members of the community. Both have served in the military when they were much younger. The PCs may have already met Mayor Jyn Dolahn depending on their actions in town before taking this assignment.

This scene is as long as you choose it to be, but there should be some opportunity for roleplay between the PCs and the voters. How they treat the three folk on the committee makes a huge difference in the resolution later in the adventure.

This Encounter doesn't change for Jalab's crew. PCs on Jalab's crew will see though that Jalab seems like a different person around voters. He is actually present on the work site, even appearing to lend a hand when the committee arrives. As soon as they leave he heads back to the comforts of his home.

Read or paraphrase the following:

You are hard at work on the foundation of the bridge, when a break is called. Olmek has his son Pryam bring water around for all of you and work completely halts.

Looking up from your labors, you see three newcomers have arrived at the site. A man in his later years, dressed lightly in a simple linen tunic and fine pants, walks beside a woman of similar age. She has on a plain sensible dress with a pair of woolen hose beneath. Both have very critical looks on their faces.

Behind them a second man seems to be examining everything from the tools to the stones. He shakes his head from time to time, letting his thinning hair fly from side to side.

"Valon, Maratha! How good of you to come!" Olmek says warmly. "If I'd know you'd be dropping by, I'd have sent a coach for you!"

The man in the lead sighs. "This would be a poor surprise inspection if we'd warned you first, candidate Garshweth." The woman on his arm nods her cool agreement.

"Fair enough." Olmek laughs, seeming undeterred. "And you, Mayor Dolahn," he says to the person behind them. "A fine day to you too!"

"Fine indeed for some, but not for me. This heat is for the young, not for the likes of us. You're nearly as old as I, Olmek!" The mayor shakes a finger at your employer. "You should be indoors doing something that more befits you!"

Olmek steps out of the water and moves up to the trio. "Work befits a man as long as he wishes it to. It's when he stops working that he gets old." The words get something of a wan smile from Mayor Dolahn, but the other two just roll their eyes in disapproval.

"We are here," the one he addressed as Valon says, "to inspect your work site. We all feel that we could vote not only on the finished bridge but how it was built too."

The woman nods again. "Aye, and we've come to inspect your workers too. Let's have a look at them." With that, all three of them turn their critical, vaguely disapproving eyes on you.

It will be very easy at this point for the PCs to return rudeness with rudeness, but do them the service of having Olmek or one of his sons mouth "Behave!" where the committee can not see them. Then, if the PCs choose to continue being belligerent, let them.

The committee isn't here to be friendly, but they will return like with like. If the PCs, or most of them at least, are polite, they will be so as well. They will not be warm at all, but they will be polite.

After a battery of questions ranging from "Why are you helping Olmek with this bridge?" to "Why aren't you back home, farming or doing something honest?" the committee will leave. From the look of Olmek's face, he is happy to see them go. He'll fill them in on who the three were and the role they serve as the Voting Committee.

If the party was rude to the Voters, Olmek will understand. He will ask them to please keep a civil (or silent) tongue if they return.

Once this scene ends, finish the rolls for the foundation phase and tally the results on the sheet provided in the handouts. Then, move to the support phase and scene two.

Encounter 6: Second Visit

Like before Jalab seems to know when the committee is coming for an inspection. He arrives in impeccable work clothes and lends a hand with the construction for a few minutes before they arrive. Then, he talks with them and sees them away from the site. As expected, he does not return once they leave. Kulgar seems disgusted with this, but he has a job to do.

It's been some time. The foundation has been sunk and rendered stable. Both 'hands', as the sections of the foundation built on either side of the stream are called are finished. You are weary, but the work is going apace and Olmek seems well pleased with you.

If there are any young folk or women among the PCs, Olmek has likely taken a fatherly liking to them by now. He has been offering well-meaning but ultimately country borne advice to them during breaks and when work slows enough to talk. He shows a genuine interest in all the PCs, asking them why they adventure and for stories of their travels (if they have any to tell).

After a minute or two of roleplay here, continue:

You hear Pryam mutter again. This time, it's not about wishing the bridge were done. No, this time it's "Oh, by Pelor's burning gaze... Not them again..."

Glancing up, you see what he means. The three voters are back. They give the entire site a quick glance, then move to Olmek with a purpose. They pause for a moment to speak with you again. This time, their manner is just as curt as before.

After a minute or two of questions, mostly dealing with the party's whereabouts for the past few nights, they turn back to Olmek.

"We need to talk, candidate Garshweth." the lady Maratha says curtly.

"Of course." Olmek answers as he extricates himself from the tangle of planks he was working on. He goes over to them and they move away from the site to talk.

Anyone who wishes to may make a successful Listen check (DC 15) or use magic to overhear the conversation. If they do eavesdrop read the following. If not, skip it and read the passage after it.

"We've had a report of possible sabotage from Kreshin's work site, Olmek" the woman continues once they are out of earshot.

"Nothing's happened here." he answers them in a confused tone.

Valon Kesk replies, "Not from him, to him. The word is that one of your boys went down to his camp and watered down a whole load of mortar. They had a break in their foundation yesterday."

Olmek nods, but then shakes his head. "No one here did that, and you've my word on it. I keep an eye on my boys, and they know better."

The mayor speaks. "Of course, Olmek. We know you and we know your children. Who we don't know are them..." With that, he points towards the lot of you. "They might not want to lose, you know?"

Olmek scowls softly. "Look here, Jyn. They may be strangers to you, but I've been slogging mud with them for a few days now. I don't think they are the sort to do that, and I'll ask you to take that back."

The mayor holds up his hands. "Sorry, Olmek. I take it back. We got no facts to pin it on anyone. Hells a nine, the mortar might have just been weak. We'll let it go."

"For now." Maratha says.

The mortar problem mentioned did occur to the Jalab camp, but it came from Kreshin's stinginess over using enough expensive silt as opposed to sand in the mortar. With too slight a mixture, the foundation was bound to crack.

After the conversation ends, read on:

Olmek returns. "Well, that was pleasant." The look on his face shows that it was anything but. "I tell you what, my fellows, let's break for lunch. Kelori's fish should be just about done. Let's up and to the house."

The promise of another home-cooked meal lends you the strength to hike with Olmek and his sons the half-mile back to their home.

Work continues, and you can now complete the rolls for the second phase. Record the results and move to scene three.

Encounter 7: The Quarry

Unfortunately, you can't build a bridge without stone. At this point of the construction, both sides will need to re-supply. What neither Jalab nor Olmek know is the town's quarry has been taken over by a displaced tribe of gnolls from the Little Hills.

Kuurkrahk, the chieftain of the gnolls, and his tribe are war-weary from constant battles with the halflings of the Little Hills. As such, their tribe is nearly extinct and they have been constantly on the move. This life has taken the edge off their savage natures (NE instead of CE) and has left them wanting little more than a place they can call home.

This scene is quite different if the PCs are working for Jalab. Having not adequately planned for the project despite the advice of his dwarven engineer, Kreshin runs out of stone before Olmek. Wanting to get the most use out of his hirelings, Jalab sends the PCs to fetch more from the quarry. Run the rest of this scene using the gnoll statistics in brackets and ignoring the references to the slaughtered cartage team. If the PCs are not careful they will end up *being* the slaughtered cartage team.

Olmek calls you all aside as his sons continue to lay planks across the support scaffold. "Good folk, we've hit a snag in the works." With one hand, he gestures to a small pile of stones.

"That's all the rock we have left. I've been to the stonemason, but his team hasn't come back from the quarry since yesterday. It's only a four-hour ride, so something may have happened to them."

He looks thoughtful, then asks, "Would you take my cart to the quarry and see what's keeping the cutting team? This isn't part of what I asked you to do, but I'd be grateful if you would."

He waits for a reply. He understands if the party refuses and sends two of his sons (Pryam and Ithal) instead. When they haven't returned by nightfall, and they won't. He gathers a group of townsfolk militia to ride with him to the site. PCs who do not go with him now are essentially out of a job (and out of the rest of the game). Olmek will discharge them as cowards. If the PCs wish to go with him then, run the rest of this scene as normal. Be sure to add Pryam and Ithal's bodies to your description of the quarry carnage.

Assuming the PCs choose to go the first time, Olmek lends them his cart and draft horses. Move to the rest of the scene below.

The quarry is a long ride from town, up along the very edge of the Little Hills. Here, the stone of the hills is exposed enough for stone cutters to make a good harvest.

As you approach, you see another wagon like yours near the path leading into the manmade canyon. The horses for it are no where to be seen.

Rounding the trail to enter the quarry, you draw near the wagon. No sign of life is anywhere to be seen; not near the cart and not in the quarry itself. This place seems utterly abandoned.

Any who ask to examine the cart will find a heavy piece of canvas pulled over what might be a load of stones in its bed. However, the flies and the smell will hint to something far worse. When (if) someone pulls back the cloth, read:

The canvas seems to stick to whatever lies beneath it at first. Then, it pulls back to reveal hundreds of bones and several severed heads. Some human, some horse, all seem to have been gnawed and discarded here still fresh. None of them are more than two or three days old, with many of them fresher than that.

As the party makes this discovery, they are in turn about to be discovered. A gnoll, who has just exited the quarry's single mining cave, sees them and howls out a warning to the rest of his tribe. (PCs with Alertness will have the possibility of circumventing this, but they must have line of sight on the quarry cave's entrance and be able to silence the gnoll in one round, probably at a distance of more than 100 feet).

The gnoll spends his entire round howling and making enough noise as possible in order to alert the rest of the tribe, he will attack the PCs on the second round. One gnoll will come out of the cave on the third round. Two will exit on the fourth round and two will exit on the fifth round. The chieftain with his mate and two bodyguards will exit on round six, and finally three gnolls will arrive from the cave on round seven.

This fight might be difficult for a very low-level PCs, but there is a chance for a peaceful resolution after at least one gnoll is slain. The chieftain will bark out an attempt at parley on any round following the death of a gnoll. This attempt will make every other gnoll delay until all the PCs have acted. Kuurkrahk, the chieftain, will only attempt to parley twice. If his attempts are ignored, he will then commit himself and his people to a fight to the death.

Use the Quarry Map for this combat. Place the gnolls at the ambush points marked if the PCs are coming here on a stone-fetching errand for Jalab. They have no warning of the gnolls' presence unless they think to scout the area before entering.

Tier1 (EL 3)

Gnoll Warrior (4): CR 1; Medium-Sized Humanoid; HD 2d8+2; hp 10 (each); Init 0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (+1 natural, +4 scale, +1 wooden shield); Atks +3 melee (1d6+2 [crit x4], heavy pick); AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref 0, Will 0.

Str 15, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +3, Spot +3; Feats: Power Attack

Equipment: scalemail, wooden shield, heavy pick

Kuurkrahk, Gnoll Chieftain (1): CR 1; Medium-Sized Humanoid; HD 2d8+2; hp 18; Init 0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (+1

natural, +4 scale +2 large wooden shield); Atks +4 melee (1d8+4 [crit. 19-20], masterwork longsword); AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref 0, Will 0.

Str 17, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +3, Spot +3; Feats: Power Attack.

Equipment: scalemail, large wooden shield, masterwork longsword.

Tier 2 (EL 6)

Gnoll Warrior (6): use the stats above.

Gnoll Bodyguard (1): CR 1; Medium-Sized Humanoid; HD 2d8+2; hp 16; Init 0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15 (+1 natural, +4 scale); Atks +4 melee (1d12+5 [crit x3], greataxe); AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref 0, Will 0.

Str 17, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +3, Spot +3; Feats: Power Attack

Equipment: scalemail, greatsword

Kuurkrahk, Gnoll Chieftain (1): use the stats above.

Tier 3 (EL 8)

Gnoll Warrior (8): Use the stats above.

Gnoll Bodyguard (2): Use the stats above.

Kuurkrahk, Gnoll Chieftain (1): Use the stats above.

Note: one of the gnoll warriors is Ghnurli, the chieftain's mate.

Kuurkrahk, if given a chance to parley, will ask to speak on behalf of his tribe. They do not really want to make war any more. Sense Motive (DC 15) will ascertain the truth of this. Still, detection of alignment will reveal they are evil, but only faintly (see the *detect evil* spell, p. 192 of the *Player's Handbook*).

All Kuurkrahk really wants to live and hunt in peace, but his tribe is too small now to compete in more humanoid controlled areas. He offers to move on though, taking his chances elsewhere rather than face extinction at the hands of the party.

If pressed, he will even offer the extent of his tribe's treasure; 106 cp, 82 sp, 59 gp, and a single small emerald worth 100 gold. (This can, of course, also be looted from the cave if the gnolls are defeated). It is all kept in a heavy leather pouch under his sleeping furs that he and Ghnurli share. He will even trade his sword for another weapon if anyone shows an interest in it, and he thinks this could save his tribe.

Of course, this poses a moral dilemma for PCs. Is it just to slay creatures offering to surrender and move on? Is it just to let them live, knowing that they will possibly hunt others in the future? This is an opportunity for roleplay and debate. There is no right answer, only personal answers.

If Olmek is here with the PCs because his sons went missing, he will not forgive the gnolls. His sons' heads were in the wagon, and he desires revenge for their

deaths. He will offer no quarter at all, nor will the militia folk he brought with him.

If the gnolls are allowed to surrender, they take what they are allowed to grab and leave to quarry headed east. They swim the Javan and head across the border, never to return. If not, or if the attempts were not recognized or acknowledged, they fight to the death. Either way, the party has (hopefully) survived and can proceed with what they came here to do.

There is more than enough discarded and unloaded stone here to finish both bridges. There is certainly more than one cart can haul back. A cart from the PCs opponent will arrive as they are loading up and if unmolested, will do the same.

If a fight breaks out, use the relevant statistics for the parties involved from the Appendix. The PCs' rivals will not use lethal combat unless they do. PCs working for Jalab get a 50 gp reward for delaying the other team this way, but is immediately fired and turned over to Nighford justice if one of Olmek's sons are slain. Kreshin wants to win a political race, not start a blood feud.

The team that loses this conflict, if one takes place at all, suffers a -10 CP penalty to the walkway phase of the bridge due to the delay.

Assuming both teams are still able to return with loads of stone, the contest continues. Finish the rolls for the walkway phase, record the results, and move on to Encounter 8.

Encounter 8: Long Walk, Short Bridge

Now comes the ugliest part of the contest. Various actions taken by the party may have the contest anywhere from nearly a sure thing to looking bleak. Either way, Jalab isn't taking any chances. His dominance of shipping in the town of Nighford didn't come from trusting luck, after all. It came from a ruthless nature and careful planning.

He isn't about to let Olmek, a 'yeoman simpleton', take from him what should have been his without question. There is no doubt in Jalab Kreshin's mind that he should be Grossspokesman. If he has to cheat to assure that victory, he is more than prepared to do so.

While this chapter is written from the preventative view, with PCs stopping Jalab's sabotage, it can easily be turned around to have the PCs as the saboteurs; to do so just flip the scenes to the saboteur's point of view. You can do this by having one or more of Olmek's sons in place of the PCs. Remember that the saboteur PCs are given struck orders to make sure no one is killed during these espionage attempts. Because of this the PCs may have their hands full trying to save Olmek and his sons while trying to subtly wreck his bridge; all while trying not to leave any evidence of their involvement.

In this encounter, flagstones are laid, the railing is completed, and the bridge's surface is fitted and reinforced. Describe this work to the players, then have them camp for the night. Olmek is now insisting, gently

but firmly, that the bridge be guarded. He will even stay himself. When everyone is settled, run the scene.

Jalab's son, Alik, along with a pair of hired hands have released a gray ooze into the stream near Olmek's bridge. Their plan is for the jelly to consume the wooden supports of the bridge before Olmek finishes covering them.

Unfortunately, the gray ooze has something of a mind of its own and stops before it gets to the bridge to consume a tree root exposed in the middle of the stream. The sound of Alik and his thugs throwing stones at the jelly to move it off the root alerts anyone on watch (Ulme, if none of the PCs thought to post a guard) immediately. Once the PCs are up and cognizant, read:

A little ways upstream, you see a strange sight in the moonlight. A slick, viscous mound of goo, greyish-ochre in color, is in the stream near the bridge. Even as you sight it, it begins to move. Where it was, the steaming remains of a once thick tree root disintegrate into the water.

"Pelor's gaze, the bridge!" Ulme shouts and grabs a spear from the campsite. "We can't let that thing get near the bridge!"

The ooze will reach the bridge in four rounds, as the water is aiding its normally slow movement rate. Those who do not wish to enter the stream to fight must use spells, ranged weapons, or wait until the third round, where it will be close enough to the bridge to engage in melee.

If the gray ooze survives to reach the bridge, it will do 3 CP worth of damage to this last phase of building until it is destroyed. Also, if fire is used while the ooze is in contact with the bridge, the flame will do half its damage in CPs to the flammable supports.

Tier 1 (EL 4)

Gray Ooze (1): CR 4; Medium-Size Ooze; HD 3d10+10; hp 24; Init 0; Spd 10 ft.; AC 5 (-5 Dex); Atks +3 melee, (1d6+1 and 1d6 acid, slam); SQ Improved grab, acid, constrict, camouflage; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref -4, Will -4.

Str 12, Dex 1, Con 11, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

SQ: *Improved Grab (Ex)*—to use this ability, the gray ooze must hit with its slam attack. If it gets a hold it can constrict; *Acid (Ex)*—A gray ooze excretes a digestive acid that quickly dissolves organic material and metal. Any melee hit deals acid damage. The ooze's acidic touch deals 40 points of damage per round to wood or metal objects. Armor or clothing dissolves and become useless immediately unless it succeeds a Reflex save (DC 19). The acid cannot harm stone. Metal or wooden weapons that strike a gray ooze also dissolves immediately unless it succeeds a Reflex save (DC 19); *Constrict (Ex)*—A gray ooze deals automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check. The opponent's clothing and armor suffer a -4 penalty to Reflex saves against the acid; *Camouflage (Ex)*—It takes a successful Spot check (DC 15) to recognize a motionless gray ooze for what it really is.

Tier 2 (EL 6)

Gray Ooze (1): CR 6; Medium-Size Ooze; HD 5d10+10; hp 35; Init 0; Spd 10 ft.; AC 5 (-5 Dex); Atks +3 melee, (1d6+1 and 1d6 acid, slam); SQ Improved grab, acid, constrict, camouflage; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref -4, Will -4.

Str 12, Dex 1, Con 11, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

SQ: *Improved Grab (Ex)*—to use this ability, the gray ooze must hit with its slam attack. If it gets a hold it can constrict; *Acid (Ex)*—A gray ooze excretes a digestive acid that quickly dissolves organic material and metal. Any melee hit deals acid damage. The ooze's acidic touch deals 40 points of damage per round to wood or metal objects. Armor or clothing dissolves and become useless immediately unless it succeeds a Reflex save (DC 19). The acid cannot harm stone. Metal or wooden weapons that strike a gray ooze also dissolves immediately unless it succeeds a Reflex save (DC 19); *Constrict (Ex)*—A gray ooze deals automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check. The opponent's clothing and armor suffer a -4 penalty to Reflex saves against the acid; *Camouflage (Ex)*—It takes a successful Spot check (DC 15) to recognize a motionless gray ooze for what it really is.

Tier 3 (EL 8)

Gray Ooze (1): CR 8; Large-Size Ooze; HD 7d10+10; hp 46; Init 0; Spd 10'; AC 5 (-1 size, -5 Dex +1 natural); Atks +5 melee (1d6+1 and 1d6 acid, slam); SQ Improved grab, acid, constrict, camouflage; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref -4, Will -4.

Str 12, Dex 1, Con 11, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

SQ: *Improved Grab (Ex)*—to use this ability, the gray ooze must hit with its slam attack. If it gets a hold it can constrict; *Acid (Ex)*—A gray ooze excretes a digestive acid that quickly dissolves organic material and metal. Any melee hit deals acid damage. The ooze's acidic touch deals 40 points of damage per round to wood or metal objects. Armor or clothing dissolves and become useless immediately unless it succeeds a Reflex save (DC 19). The acid cannot harm stone. Metal or wooden weapons that strike a gray ooze also dissolves immediately unless it succeeds a Reflex save (DC 19); *Constrict (Ex)*—A gray ooze deals automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check. The opponent's clothing and armor suffer a -4 penalty to Reflex saves against the acid; *Camouflage (Ex)*—It takes a successful Spot check (DC 15) to recognize a motionless gray ooze for what it really is.

When the ooze is defeated, the excitement is over for the night. Alik and his thugs do not stay to watch the fight. They ran as soon as Ulme shouted an alarm.

The PCs can return to sleep or to guard, but nothing else occurs. Jalab is not so desperate yet to try anything more open or direct. That will change...

Encounter 9:

Ashes to Ashes, Rust to Rust

In this encounter Alik is back on orders from his father. Equipped with something Jalab paid a great deal for a long time ago, he intends to take advantage of Olmek's limited resources. Alik is carrying a vial of rusting powder, an alchemical compound that dissolves metal on contact. Without tools, Kreshin's believes, Olmek will not be able to finish his bridge in time for the vote. Tomorrow is the last day of the contest, which does not give Olmek enough time to procure or make new tools.

The resolution of this scene is up to the GM. It is suggested that Olmek have all his sons sleeping in two by two shifts with the PCs doing likewise. He is no fool, and the ochre jelly was an awfully convenient 'accident' for his opponent. He is feeling the time crunch and knows that if Kreshin is going to try anything else, it will be tonight.

It has been a tense night. The usual jovial conversation around the fire has been muted as those on watch duty keep careful eye on the sum of your hard labors. The bridge sits nearby, nearly finished...and vulnerable.

The moon rose hours ago and continues to shed its dim light over the camp. Between in and the low fire, shadows abound. Vision is difficult and the sounds of the forest build and ebb in an eerie rhythm. Guarding this bridge has never been this dangerous, this creepy. Everyone is nervous.

Anything could happen, at any moment.

Let the party stay tense this way for a while, playing up their isolation and the desperate nature of their position. Be sure to allow the PCs several Spot and Listen rolls. Choose one of these rolls for the time when Alik makes his move, and don't alert the PCs if they fail. All this tension has a good source after all; if the bridge isn't finished tomorrow, all their work was for nothing.

Olmek has chosen to guard the bridge carefully, but it did not occur to him to be that careful with the tools. As always, they are gathered and sitting in a cloth covered crate on the far side of camp. The tools are oiled every night. The crate has been kept downwind to ward off the smell.

This gives Alik the perfect opportunity. If none of the PCs have thought to protect the tools, they will likely be destroyed. Only a PC on guard who can succeed in an opposed roll against Alik's Hide (he has 5 ranks in Hide and a Dex of 15, allowing for a +7 bonus) will spot him in time to stop him. By the time the guarding PC gets to make this roll, Alik is almost to the crate. (This assumes the tools are at the edge of camp. If they have been moved closer, Alik will be spotted where the tools should have been. Use the map of Olmek's work site in the Appendix for this.)

If spotted and alerted to this fact (the PC may decide to try and stop him quietly after all), he will initiate 'combat' by trying to get to the crate and hurl the vial inside it. This means initiative rolls for everyone awake

(including Ulme and Pryam, the two brothers guarding with the PCs).

If captured (again, no one involved will be fighting in lethal combat unless the PCs do), Alik will desperately try to talk his way out of it. He will not, however, reveal that this was his father's plan. He will say that he got this vial from his father's keepsakes (true), decided to come and destroy the tools (technically true), and came here alone to do it (also technically true). If asked directly if his father was involved, 'Weasel' will rant about how Jalab Kreshin is a great man and deserves the Grosspokesman position far more than a country "bumpkin."

If left to make the decision himself, Olmek will go with Ulme and run Alik back home. If the party objects to this plan, he will invite them to come along. He refuses to believe that Jalab would get violent over this contest (and he is right; Jalab is not an evil man, just greedy and self-centered).

Those who go with Olmek are greeted by a tired looking Jalab who listens with feigned shock (detectable by a Sense Motive, DC 15) to the sordid details of his son's plan. Then he assures Olmek and the party that he will see to it his son is punished for this (which is true, especially if he didn't succeed). Then he bids them all good night. There is work to be done in the morning. "May the best man win," he will say as they leave. A Sense Motive will not be needed to detect the faint derision in his voice.

This scene can end a number of ways. If the tools were saved, proceed on with scene three. Olmek will reward the PC that spotted Alik with the vial of rusting powder and a great deal of grateful praise.

If the tools were not saved, the CPs Olmek can contribute to this phase drops from 80 to 50 unless the tools can somehow be replaced. Player ingenuity should be rewarded here, returning some or all of the lost 30 CPs depending on the idea(s).

When ready, adjudicate the final scene in the chapter, then move on to Encounter 10.

Encounter 10:

To Sway a Golden Mind

This scene does not truly concern the PCs and they will likely have no interaction with it unless you wish to give them a chance to intercept or eavesdrop on Jalab's bribe attempts. If you do, use the Nighford map and the Townsfolk bios in the Appendix as guides for the scene. Otherwise (and especially if the table is running out of tournament time), just decide how the bribery goes using the system below and proceed to the next chapter.

PCs working for Jalab will have nothing to do with this scene unless they have given him good reason to think they can be discrete. Otherwise, he trusts the bribe attempts to his son Alik or a loyal manservant. If the party has convinced him to use them, the three bribes can be interesting to play out and make for excellent, if morally questionable, roleplaying.

Jalab's chosen agent(s) will be using a combination of the Diplomacy skill (Alik or Jalab's manservant has 5 ranks and a 14 CHR; total bonus +7) and a huge amount of money (1000 gold) to buy the voter's consideration.

All three members of the committee are moral people, but Kershin has a lot of influence in the community and a refused bribe could be as detrimental as the guilt they would feel over accepting. Thus, it comes down to fate (a die roll) and the PCs actions. Total the modifiers below and roll one opposed check for each person: Diplomacy score versus Will Save. For reference, Mayor Dolahn has a 14 Wisdom (+2), Valon Kesk has an 11 (+0), and Maratha Kesk has a 16 (+3); all three begin with a +1 for their essentially moral natures.

If the PCs have:	Then Alik is:	Then Voters are:
been rude to the Voters	+1	-
driven off/killed the Gnolls	-	+1/+2
had no good excuse for the 'mortal sabotage'	+1	-
been very kind to the Voters or generous in town	-	+1
seriously injured any townfolk	+2	-
not succeeded at stopping any sabotage	+1	
obvious clerics/paladins of Pelor, Heironeous, or St. Cuthbert		+1 per level per cleric/paladin
As above, but of any recognized evil diety	+1 per level per cleric	

Add any other modifiers as you see fit, then roll and compare. Each roll that indicates a successful bribe results in the appropriate modifier when the voting occurs in the next chapter.

Complete the finishing stage, record the results, and proceed to Encounter 10.

Encounter 10: The Final Stone

Here, all the work and struggle comes to a close. The voters come to Olmek's bridge and render their decisions. They do not announce the results aloud, preferring to announce it in town at a mayoral rally.

Decisions, Decisions

There is no other way to describe it. You are pleasantly exhausted. Some of you have never worked this hard in your lives. As you stand by the edifice of your efforts, watching the three voters pour over it, you see the same pride and fatigue in Olmek's eyes.

After what feels like hours, they pull back and go to your employer. As impartially as possible, they tell him to present

himself and those he feels deserve to be with him to the mayoral rally tonight. Then, they board their coach and leave.

With growing excitement, he tells his boys to go clean up. Then, as he dashes off with them, he stops and turns to you. "Well, you lot? You coming? You've earned this as much as the rest of us!" He smiles warmly and takes you back to his home.

At this point, allow the PCs to make plans for the rally. If they choose to, let them describe how they are dressed, what they will carry, and how they intend to act. If they need encouragement, begin by describing the fine new clothes Olmek and his family are wearing. Both girls are in fine linen dresses (Ivea is in a hunter green, Kelori wears a dark burgundy that nicely sets off her dark auburn hair) and both are wearing simple silver jewelry. All four boys emulate their father more or less by wearing a new white shirt, tailored jackets and pants of black flaxen stock, and knee high leather boots.

If each phase of the bridge met its base CP cost, Olmek will gladly take anyone who wishes to go into town for clothes shopping (on him, up to 10 gold each, as a gift for their fine work). Otherwise, he will gladly take them into town, but they will have to shop out of their share of the 200 gold he now pays them.

And the Winner is...

That's a good question. To determine it, total the modifiers from the Bridge Construction Sheet, add a +2 modifier for each voter Jalab successfully bribed, and make an opposed roll between Olmek and Jalab. If PCs went above and beyond normal efforts for either side, add a +1 to +5 modifier as you see fit. The highest roll wins. Once you've determined the winner, read the following text.

The gathering outside the Mayor's home grows larger by the moment. Millicent has set up a table of delicacies and drink mugs, as have a few of Nighford's more gregarious citizens. The ale flows freely as folk gather to hear the pending announcement.

Olmek stands near you, fielding a hundred well wishes with a warm smile and an honest word of gratitude. Nearby, but opposite the congregation from you, Jalab Kreshin and his son sit in chairs they had brought from home. No one seems to be speaking much with the Kreshin group, but he doesn't seem concerned.

Down the street from this growing throng you see Jalab's Bridge. It's a solid piece of work spanning the stream with two walkways. Places rest along the thick stone rim for flower beds to be laid, but they are empty now. You have to admit; it's a fine piece of work.

Eventually, the voter committee comes out from Mayor Dolahn's house and approach the assembly. As if by silent approval of the Kesks, the mayor is the one to speak.

"Good folk of Nighford and visiting friends, the end is finally here. And now that it is the end I must say that it is neither Jalab Kreshin nor Olmek Garshweth who is the winner of this contest. No, the real winners are the people of Nighford. Two bridges now span the stream that once divided

our good town. One will be a joy to see every day when we do our shopping and run our errands."

As he says that, he gestures to Jalab's bridge. Kreshin himself just nods, coldly acknowledging the compliment.

"The other will not be so well know, but will affect us just as much. The Garshweth Bridge stems the widest point of the stream and will be a great aid to our carters and travelling merchants. What took hard labor to ford will now be an effortless crossing."

Olmak smiles and looks touched by the mayor's words. The look on Kreshin's face leaves little doubt that aiding his town with a bridge the way Olmek did never crossed his mind.

"In the end, though, we had to choose one. We finally did, but it was not easy. The winning bridge builder, and Nighford's new grosspokesman for our district is...insert winner's name!"

With that, the mayor smiles and throws his hands in the air. "I declare the contest ended and the rally begun! Enjoy yourselves, one and all!" The town of Nighford erupts in festival all around you.

If the PCs are with the winning builder, they have great reason to celebrate as well. Also, if they are working for Olmek and they win, he presses a small pouch with 25 gold into each of their hands. "It's the least you deserve..." If not, the end of the adventure depends on their employer.

If they were working for Jalab, he fixes them with a cold stare, pays them what he agreed to, and will have nothing to do with them again.

If they were working for Olmek and lost, he is in relatively fine spirits regardless.

"The town is served either way, and this way I don't have to move. Come, you've worked like trail dogs for me. Let's see if we can't relax for a night!"

No grudge is held at all, and the PCs are still treated like family friends.

The End

Experience Point Summary

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the discretionary roleplaying experience award. The roleplaying award should be given for consistent character portrayal and contribution to the fun of the game. You can award different roleplaying amounts to different characters.

Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

Encounter 3

Quality of bridge construction

0-75 xp

Encounter 5

Acting politely to the voters

25 xp

Encounter 7

Defeating the gnolls

75 xp

Encounter 8

Preventing the gray ooze from destroying the bridge

25 xp

Encounter 9

Preventing or successfully sabotaging the Olmek's bridge

50 xp

Defeating the gray ooze

100 xp

Encounter 11

Helping to win the contest

100 xp

Total experience for objectives

450 xp

Discretionary roleplaying award

0-50 xp

Total possible experience

500 xp

Treasure Summary

Player characters may keep items from the scenario that are listed on the treasure list below or which meet the following conditions:

1. The item must be non-magical and specifically listed in the text of the adventure (e.g. armor on foes). If it is not listed in the text, the characters cannot keep it. Items of this nature can be sold for 50% of book value, or recorded on a log sheet.
2. Animals, followers, monsters, henchmen, and so forth (any living being, basically) may not be kept from a scenario for any reason unless the treasure summary lists the being specifically. It is okay for the player characters to form relationships with NPCs, but these will not be certified and cannot bring material benefit to the character. Contacts (sources of extra information) must be specifically certified.
3. Theft is against the law, but may be practiced by some player characters. Items worth more than 100 gp that are of personal significance to the owner (including family heirlooms), and all magical items, will be discovered in the possession of the character by one means or another. The character must return the item and pay a fine equal to three times the value of the item stolen. In addition, the PC caught receives campaign-decided penalties for being known as a thief, such as Infamy. For other stolen items which meet the criteria in #1 above, use your judgment and the circumstances within the game to determine whether a PC thief gets away with the theft or not.

Any item retained according to these rules, which does not have a certificate, will not ever have a certificate issued for it.

The campaign staff reserves the right to take away any item or gold acquired for things it later finds unreasonable but which were allowed at the time.

Working for Jalab:

- Up to 300 gold each for working on the bridge
- 10 gold each for going to the Quarry
- 25 gold each for pouring the Ochre Jelly into the stream
- 100 gold to the one PC sent to rust Olmec's tools
- 50 gold each for each Voter successfully bribed

OR

Working for Olmek:

- 200 gold total for working on the bridge
- 10 gold each *worth of clothing* for excellent job on the bridge
- 25 gold each for winning the contest
- 106 cp, 82 sp, 59 gp, and a single small emerald worth 100 gold *from the gnolls*.
- **Masterwork Longsword** from Kuurkrahk (Medium, 315 gp): Elegantly forged and crafted, this sword bears dull gray blade, as if the smoke used to craft it were trapped inside. The hilt is wrapped in blue leather, and the quillons are decorated with ornamental stones. This non-magical blade confers +1 to all of the wielder's 'to hit' rolls.
- vial of **Rusting Powder** (750 gp): The contents of this vial act similarly to the druid spell *Rusting Grasp*. The vial may be used as a grenade-like missile or a weapon, although the vial must break in order for the powder to be effective. The entire quantity of powder need not be used in one use. The DM should determine how much is used for a particular application. The contents of this vial are not powerful enough to affect enchanted metal.
- 1 Influence Point from the Council of Grosspokesman if they are on the winning team: You have done a service for a member of the Council of Common Grosspokesmen. As such, you may use this influence to call forth a favor from a member of the Council should the need arise.
- **Enmity of Jalab Kreshik** if the PCs aided Olmek Garshweth and succeeded in the bridge contest

Appendix 1: Important NPCs of Nighford

Note: The quick stats for the NPCs of Nighford on the town map are incorrect. Please use the stats following each name on this list.

The Voting Council of Nighford is made up of three town elders respected by the townsfolk for their wisdom and experience. Individually, they are:

Mayor Jyn Dolahn, human male, War3; hp 21

One of the oldest and most respected citizens of Nighford, Dolahn made a name for himself thirty years ago fighting giants with his military unit in the Jotens. His exploits are often told, mostly by him and with generous embellishments, on cold Yeomanry nights at Nighford's only inn.

An honest man, Dolahn is thinking more and more about his future. He is not getting any younger, and his political career seems to have stalled with his appointment as Mayor. He knows he will never be appointed as a Grosspokesman, but he is content to remain where and what he is. He does, however, sometimes wish for a more glamorous (and wealthier) role.

Maratha Kesk, human female, Com2

Maratha is seen by most of the townsfolk as the mother they've never wanted. She pries into everyone's affairs, offering criticism and advice in the same breath. By the same token, everyone knows that she is always available for "tea and soul searching", as she calls it. She's also known as the most trustworthy of gossips (a dubious title) in town. Anything she repeats is the unpolished truth.

All of those things aside, she is very well liked. Her reputation as a meddlesome shrew is tempered by the cold compassion she shows everyone in town. While she isn't kind, Maratha can be counted on for food, shelter, and ceaseless nagging when a Nighforder needs it most.

If Maratha Kesk has any character flaw, it is her conviction that Valon and her deserve a higher quality of life than the little town of Nighford can provide. Until now, her frustrations over this have been channeled into her hard work bettering the quality of life for the people (including herself and Valon) of Nighford. If someone were to make her an offer of enough money to leave Nighford behind, however, she'd be very tempted despite her better nature.

Valon Kesk, human male, Com1

Unlike his wife in so many ways, Valon is living proof that opposites attract. Valon is quiet, unassuming, and mostly concerned with his family and business. The second son of a Loftwick wheelwright, Valon came to Nighford years ago to make his fortune continuing the trade. While it never brought him true wealth, Valon and his wife live to relative comfort.

Valon values his place in the society of Nighford. As one of the oldest men in town, he often has people ask him for advice and wisdom. He has come to see this respect as wealth of a different kind; the avarice of his youth has almost disappeared.

Unfortunately, his wife's constant mention of the better life she desires never lets it completely vanish.

Appendix 2: The Kreshins

Jalab Kreshin, human male, Rog3: CR 3; Medium-Sized Human; HD 5d6+5; hp 29; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 Studded leather); Atks +3 melee (1d8 [crit. x3], shortspear); SA Sneak attack +2d6; SQ Uncanny dodge; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +3.

Str 11, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +10, Climb +1, Diplomacy +8, Hide +4, Innuendo +4, Jump +2, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Ride +2, Swim +2; **Feats:** Improved Initiative Skill Focus (Bluff), Toughness

Equipment: Shortspear, studded leather

Jalab Kreshin is one of the two major landholders in Nighford. For over a decade, his only real rival has been Olmek Garshweth. Not a man to appreciate the benefits of an honest adversarial relationship, Jalab has focused most of his efforts toward besting Olmek and his family at everything they do.

Thus, this bridge building contest has become Jalab's obsession. Not only will beating Olmek prove to everyone in Nighford his obvious superiority, but becoming a Grosspokesman would give him the most important position in the district. To accomplish this, Jalab would pay any price and use any means at his disposal.

Jalab is not, however, an evil man. Murder and violence are not tools he is prepared to use in his conflict with the Garshweths, despite his son's many suggestions that those tools are an option. Even as obsessed as he is, the elder Kreshin would not kill to accomplish his goals. Sabotage and bribery and different matters, entirely.

Alik Kreshin, human male, Rog3: CR 2; Medium-Sized Human; HD 3d6+6; hp 21; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 studded leather); Atks +3 melee (1d8+1 [crit. x3], shortspear); SA Sneak attack +2d6; SQ Uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +2.

Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +6, Climb +1, Diplomacy +5, Hide +6, Jump +1, Move Silently +6, Ride +2, Swim +2; **Feats:** Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Focus (shortspear).

Equipment: Shortspear, studded leather

If apples don't fall far from the tree—Alik is proof that they also rot once they plummet. As cold and calculating as his father, Alik Kreshin is far crueler than Jalab will ever be. His loyalty to family is his only good trait, though he can be charming and convincing when the need arises.

Unfortunately for Alik, he does not handle failure and conflict well. As soon as a task becomes difficult, he begins looking for escape routes, short cuts, and lackeys to dump the work on. When the adventure begins he has been sent by his father to gather friends to work on the Kreshin's bridge with him. Since Alik has no real friends and no desire to toil, he approaches the PCs instead.

If the PCs are especially harsh to Alik, especially if they embarrass him in public, Jalab's orders not to get violent may get tossed aside in the heat of the moment. Alik, never one to do anything the hard way, will certainly not attack the PCs publicly, but a rogue in the shadows with a vengeful blade can be very dangerous.

Note: If at any point, the Kreshin estate's layout is required for roleplay, use the map of Olmek's farm provided in the map section and embellish with lots of superficial details.

Appendix 3: The Garshweths

Olmek Garshweth, human male Ftr4: CR 4; Medium-Sized Human; HD 4d10+8; hp 35; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather armor); Atks +7 melee (1d6+2 [crit. 19-20], short sword) or +6 ranged (1d8+2* [crit 19-20], light crossbow) AL LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2. (* +2 damage only applies to targets within 30' of Olmek when he shoots, as per Weapon Specialization).

Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills: Climb +3, Diplomacy +2, Jump +2, Knowledge (engineering) +2, Profession (farmer) +5 Ride +4, Swim +2; **Feats:** Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Toughness, Weapon Focus (light crossbow), Weapon Focus (short sword), Weapon Specialization (light crossbow).

Equipment: Crossbow, short sword, studded leather

Olmek is a man of his word, a hard worker, and a staunch supporter of the town. Add to that the years of good service he spent stationed at nearby Rockturm and the reasons for his place as one of Nighford's most respected citizens are obvious.

Olmek's family has a well-earned reputation for truthfulness. Normally, there would be no contest against his appointment as Grosspokesman for his district. Unfortunately, Jalab Kreshin wields enough power in Nighford to make voting against him dangerous for those townsfolk who owe him favors or money.

Olmek himself came up with the idea of the bridge building contest, mentioning it at a town council meeting in front of Mayor Dolahn. This public suggestion ensured that Kreshin could not suppress the idea before it was voted on. Olmek regrets not stipulating that the contestants had to work on the bridges without outside aid.

Still, Olmek believes in individual worth and would not be above hiring good folk for aid to balance the massive advantage Jalab has gained by hiring a dwarven engineer. He treats everyone in town with respect and friendly affection. As long as the PCs behave respectfully, he will extend this warmth to them.

The Garshweth Sons; Ulme, Ithal, Pryam, and Olamn, all human males, all War1: CR 1/2; Medium-Sized Humans; HD 1d8+5; hp 13 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 leather armor); Atks , +3 melee, (1d8+2 [crit. x3], short spear); AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1.

Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +1, Profession (farmer) +4, Ride +1, Swim +2; **Feats:** Great Fortitude, Toughness.

Equipment: Shortspear, leather armor.

Olmek's sons are his true legacy and they have learned well by his example. They are all very well liked in town and if one of them vouches for a person, the people of Nighford will respect his word. This can be a valuable asset for the PCs as they interact through this adventure.

Steadfast and brave, the Garshweth sons will stand beside their father come what may. That is how the PCs might get involved with Olmek's bridge, as Ulme can not bear to stand by while Alik hires even more help for his father.

Appendix 4: Bridge Construction Tracking Chart

Note: Remember that the PCs have can make two rolls per construction phase. Successfully beating the DC for that section earns them Construction Points (CP). The CP they earn in each construction phase is the total of their bonuses and penalties +1. They gain CP for each of the two rolls in each construction phase.

Step 1: Determining the Construction Benefits:

With the following chart track the PCs progress in helping complete their patron's bridge. Add their CPs to the Patrons CP and then subtract the CP needed. The result is a either a positive or negative number that will server as a bonus for the final determination roll when the judging occurs in Encounter 10. For simplicity just add the penalties and bonus to determine the groups total adjustment.

Construction Phase	PCs first roll CP	PCs second roll CP	Patron's CP	CP Needed	Balance
Foundation (DC 15)	_____ -	_____70	90	_____	
Support (DC 15)	_____ -	_____70	95	_____	
Walkway (DC 15)	_____ -	_____70	90	_____	
Finishing (DC 10)	_____ -	_____50	70	_____	
Total Balance:					_____

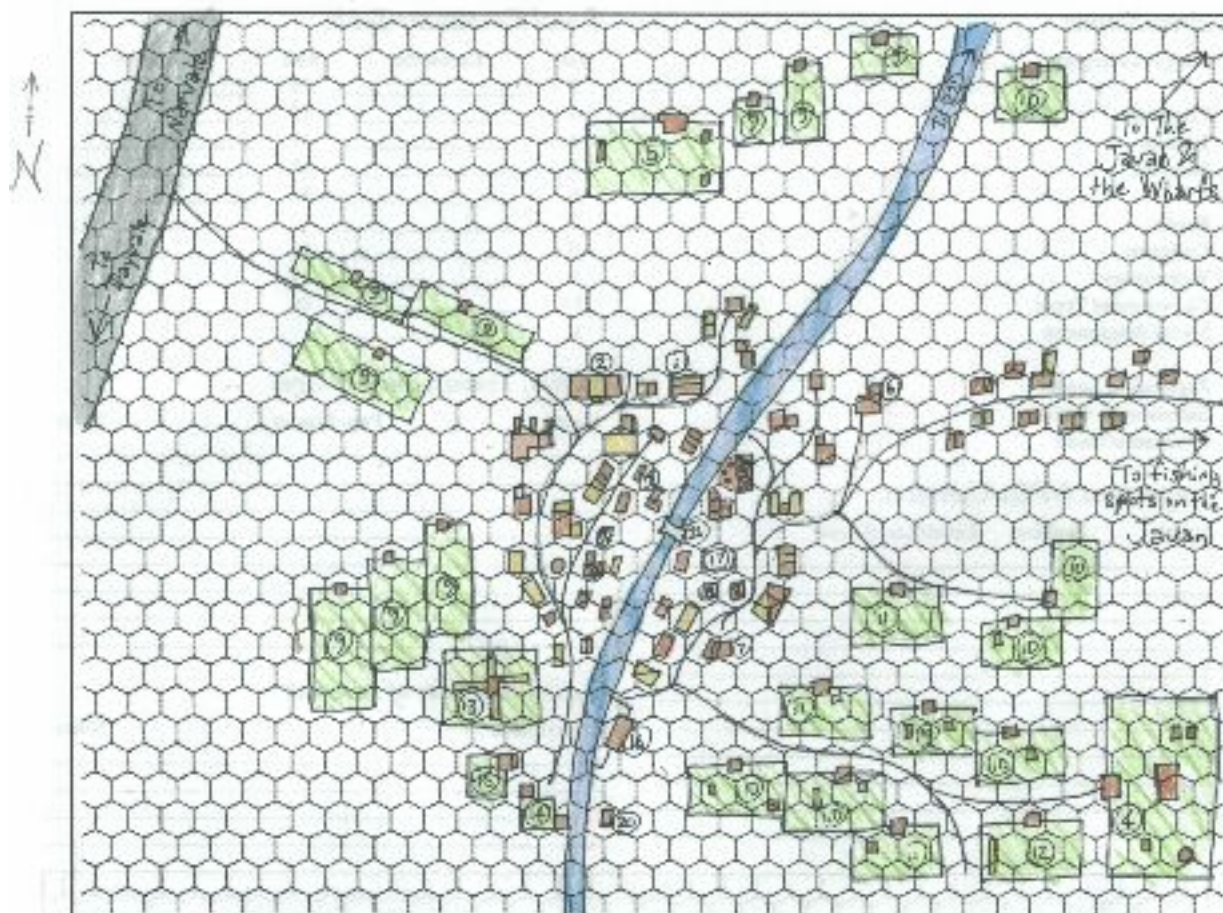
Step 2: Determining the Winner:

Determining the winner is simply a matter of an opposed checks between Olmak's and Jalab's teams. Whatever side the PCs are on, they will use their Balance of CPs totaled above to modify their side rolls. Their opponent's adjustment to the roll is determined by way of the chart below.

PCs CP balance	Opponents CP balance
0 or lower	0
+1 to +5	+3
+6 to +10	+8
+10 to +15	+12
+15 to +20	+17
+20 or above	+20

If Jalab successfully bribed the judges (see Encounter x) than he gets a +5 insight bonus to the check. Even after the bribing he could still loose, because the judges do not want to be seen as suspect if there is clearly a better bridge.

During Encounter 10, feel free to allow the one of the PCs to roll for their side's check. Roll the opponents check openly so that there is no hard feelings. In the end the whim of the judges (as represented by the dice) determines the victor.



City/Town Name: Nighford

Size (population blocks): 4,500 people (3)

Primary Race: Human

Secondary Races: Halfling

Cultural Archetype: Medieval

Social Alignment: Neutral Good (often Lawful Good)

Ruler/Leader: Mayor Jan Dolahn

Physical Description: Quiet Farming/Fishing Village

Important NPCs/Contacts:

Name	Position	Level/Race/Class	Notes
① Jan Dolahn	Mayor	0/human/-	NG
② Mordha Kesk	Council	0/human/-	NG
③ Valen Kesk	Council	0/human/-	NG
④ Millicent Dr. Jan Dolahn		0/human/-	LG
⑤ Jakob Kreshin	Lindowner	1/human/Thief	N
⑥ Alek Kreshin	Jakob's Son	2/human/Thief	CN
⑦ Olmek Garshweth	Lindowner	2/human/Jeweler	LG

Guilds, Organizations, and Power Groups

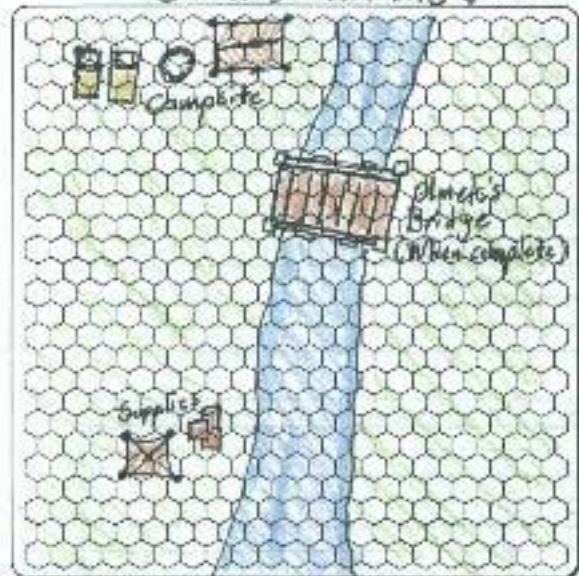
Description	Notes
Wharfs	Controlled by Jakob Kreshin
Farmers Coalition	Headed by Olmek Garshweth
⑧ Church of Peler	High Priest Mayketh Swidar (5th/p)

Resources and Services Available

Establishment	Notes
Food, Drink, and Lodging	
③ Millicent's	Nighford's finest (and only) inn
⑦ The Bread Bowl	Halfling food at its best
Common Crafts and Trades	
⑨ Bakers	
⑩ Wheat	⑪ Tubers
⑫ Fowl	⑬ Cattle
⑭ Butcher	
Other Crafts and Services	
⑮ Cheesemaker	⑯ Vintner
⑰ Provisioner	⑱ Tailors
⑲ Leatherworker	
⑳ Kreshin's Bridge	㉑ Olmek's Bridge

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Olmek's Worksite $\bigcirc = 5$ feet



The Quarry $\bigcirc = 10$ feet

